

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to have the status and content indicated in the following listing of claims, wherein any cancellation of claims is made without prejudice.

3. (currently amended) A protector for the vertical support posts of a safety rail barrier for vehicles, the safety rail barrier comprising a stamped sheet rail supported on a plurality of metallic channel-shaped support posts fixed into the ground, the posts optionally having a double-"T"- or "U"-shaped cross-section wherein the safety rail is supported above the ground with a separation between the lower edge of the rail and the ground exposing a portion of the vertical post to possible ground-sliding contact by an accident victim wherein the protector comprises an integral body having an extruded outer profile configured to surround a respective support post except for a vertically open section wherein the integral body has a generally U-shaped internal configuration permitting ~~attachment of~~ the integral body to conform with and attach to the support post wherein the support post can be received through the open section and into the internal U-shaped configuration permitting assembly and placement of the protector around the support post and wherein the integral body has multiple internal partitions defining ~~cells and~~ cells, the cells providing a compressible internal structure capable of absorbing shock in the event of impact by an accident victim.

4. (currently amended) A protector according to Claim 1 ~~3~~ wherein the integral body has a smooth outer surface, optionally formed of continuous sheet material, and, referring to a horizontal section of the integral body, the integral body has two opposed thicker parts on either side of a less thick intermediate part and wherein the protector is locatable on the respective support post so that the external surfaces of the thicker parts are disposed in external zones having a relatively high probabilities of impact and the external surface of the intermediate part is disposed in an external zone with a relatively lower probability of impact.

5. (previously presented) A protector according to Claim 4 wherein the protector is locatable on the respective support post with the open section of the extruded profile located in an external zone of improbable impact.
6. (previously presented) A protector according to Claim 3 wherein the outer profile of the integral body lies on a circle and the integral body is the product of an extrusion process.
7. (previously presented) A protector according to Claim 3 wherein the internal configuration of the integral body is shaped to fit a double-"T"-shaped support post, has a pair of opposed convex curves providing a narrowing of the open section between the bars of the "T" shapes and has detents adjacent the outer profile to engage the ends of the bar of one of the support post "T" shapes and hold the integral body attached to the support post.
8. (previously presented) A protector according to Claim 4 wherein the protector is locatable on the respective support post with the open section of the extruded profile located in an external zone of improbable impact, wherein the outer profile of the integral body lies on a circle and the integral body is the product of an extrusion process and wherein the sinuous internal configuration of the integral body is shaped to fit a double-"T"-shaped support post with convex curves providing a narrowing of the open section between the bars of the "T" shapes and with outer peripheral portions providing latches to hold the integral body attached to the support post.
9. (currently amended) A protector according to Claim 1 ~~3~~ in combination with the vertical support post for the safety rail barrier, the protector being mounted on and protecting the support post and having a vertically open section in the mounted position.

10. (currently amended) A stamped sheet safety rail barrier supported by multiple protected support posts, each protected support post comprising a protector and support post combination according to claim 9.
11. (new) A protector according to Claim 3 wherein the integral body has an sinuous-shaped, extruded internal profile.
12. (new) A protector according to Claim 3 wherein the integral body is a one-piece body.
13. (new) A protector according to Claim 3 wherein the integral body is removably attachable to the support post without requiring an additional fastening device.
14. (new) A protector according to Claim 3 wherein the integral body has an sinuous-shaped, extruded internal profile, is a one-piece body and is removably attachable to the support post without requiring an additional fastening device.
15. (new) A protector according to Claim 7 wherein the integral body has an sinuous-shaped, extruded internal profile, is a one-piece body and is removably attachable to the support post without requiring an additional fastening device.